

POLICY USAID/GENERAL NOTICE
 AA/M
 07/30/96

SUBJECT: Definitions of Country Categories

USAID's overall objectives are promoting sustainable development, supporting transitions and providing humanitarian assistance. However, to inform internal resource discussions and decision-making, on 7/29/96 the Administrator formally approved the attached set of definitions to be used to describe administrative program categories: Full Mission, Limited Mission, Limited-Humanitarian Mission, and Exit Countries.

This classification system is not intended to determine the purpose of programs (sustainable development, transition, humanitarian) but rather to serve as a norm for considering the scope of proposed country strategies and for allocating staffing levels. It will also be used by the Agency to demonstrate the rationale underlying its priorities and decisions on staffing and operating expense resources.

It should be clear that these definitions are for internal administrative use only and that they should not be used in discussions with the affected countries and the general public. The definitions are attached for the reference of all USAID employees. The attached policy is being incorporated in the new Agency Directives System as supplementary guidance to ADS Chapter 100, Organizational and Executive Management.

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Notice 749

USAID PROGRAM CATEGORIES

The Administrator has stated that USAID's overall objectives are promoting sustainable development, supporting transitions and providing humanitarian assistance. In order to inform internal discussions and decision-making, the following set of definitions will be used to describe administrative program categories: full mission, limited and exit.

1. FULL MISSIONS

Full Missions conduct USAID's major programs and will include about 25-30 countries worldwide. Posts will have an average U.S. direct-hire (USDH) cadre of 10-15. Programs will have Strategic Objectives (SOs) that support perhaps 3-4 Agency goals.

In nearly all cases full missions will support the objective of sustainable development which requires a medium- to long-term donor presence to reach graduate status. USAID would plan to remain engaged to provide support that would help a country

achieve graduation provided that there is a high quality of partnership and program performance and assuming adequate resources are available.

In a few cases full missions will be needed in transition countries. The essential difference between these and sustainable development missions is that the strategy is expected to cover a shorter term objective. In these countries USAID would expect to disengage once the democratic and/or economic transitions are consolidated and can be expected to continue without USAID support. A small sub-set of "transition graduates" will be considered as candidates for sustainable development programs.

2. LIMITED MISSIONS

Limited Missions are different from full missions in two respects: (1) the program generally will be limited to supporting 1-2 Agency goals and (2) there will be fewer staff. In most cases, the objective of these programs will be sustainable development; however, like the preceding category, some transition programs may be supported by a limited mission.

In advanced developing countries, USAID will fill a specific niche, preferably playing a catalytic rather than long-term role. Other donors, other USG agencies and the private sector will be expected to assume a predominant role if the country has been identified as a graduation candidate.

Washington will have a greater role in advising these posts as to which Agency goals address U.S. interests and represent USAID's comparative advantage. U.S. interests will usually be defined in terms of a particular country's contribution to solving global or regional problems of rapid population growth, the spread of HIV/AIDS, protecting biodiversity or reducing green house gas emissions. However, if interests other than these are believed to predominate, programs outside these sectors will be considered on an exceptional basis.

Missions that are moving from full to limited status will start now to reduce and reconfigure programs. They will develop and implement plans that help make USAID investments sustainable. Partnerships and other innovations are encouraged with the host government, the private sector, other donors and USG agencies. Up to two years will be allowed (FY 1998) to achieve transitions.

3. LIMITED-HUMANITARIAN

Limited-Humanitarian typically means that a very small USAID staff is on-the-ground providing humanitarian and/or reconstruction assistance.

4. EXIT

Exit countries are those where USAID expects to close programs. There are several types of exit: those countries where the need

for a bilateral concessional assistance presence will end by the Year 2000 or shortly thereafter; where the prospects for successful sustainable development programs do not justify continuing a program; or where USAID can no longer afford to maintain a presence.

In the first case, a plan is to be developed and implemented to ensure the recipient country's ability to continue development on its own after USAID's departure. In the second and third cases, plans will demonstrate that close-out will be accomplished in an orderly manner and in the shortest possible time consistent with U.S. interests. No USAID staff are expected beyond established exit dates.

In a few cases, it may be appropriate to continue assistance programs implemented by intermediaries or other partners after USAID's departure. Monitoring will be done from neighboring countries or Washington. These cases will be considered on an exceptional basis according to the current policy guidelines for programs in non-presence countries; however, the Agency expects to exercise greater flexibility in approving such exceptions than in the first round of USAID post closings. Non-presence programs as part of graduation strategies will receive priority and Missions will be encouraged to seek opportunities like the New Partnership Initiative (NPI) and other innovations.